

Message Text

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41

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-10 ACDA-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MC-02 OMB-01 /093 W

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R 311635Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3584

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, MOPS, MASS, AG, SU, SS

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: FRENCH EMBASSY ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY
SITUATION

1. IN PAST DAYS, FRENCH EMBASSY HERE HAS MADE FOLLOWING
COMMENTS TO US ON MILITARY SITUATION IN SAHARA:

A. SOVIET ASSISTANCE: SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENTS TO
ALGERIA CEASED ABOUT THREE WEEKS AGO. THIS IN ITSELF
DOES NOT IMPLY WEAKENING OF SOVIET COMMITMENT TO
ALGERIAN CAUSE. AMOUNT OF MATERIAL SO FAR
DELIVERED IS AS MUCH OR MORE THAN ALGERIANS LOGISTICALLY
EQUIPPED TO HANDLE. SOVIET ATTITUDE, HOWEVER, IS ONE
OF CAUTION AS THEY NOT AT ALL SURE THAT ALGERIANS CAN
REVERSE SITUATION IN SAHARA AND THEREFORE RELUCTANT TO
BURN THEIR BRIDGES WITH RABAT ENTIRELY. IN THIS
CONNECTION, KING HASSAN'S BREAKING OF RELATIONS WITH
GDR WAS EFFECTIVE AND WELL TIMED WARNING TO MOSCOW.

B. ALGERIAN CAPABILITIES: ALGERIAN ARMED FORCES WEAK IN
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TRAINING. AIR FORCE PILOTS ARE BELIEVED INCAPABLE OF FLYING

EFFECTIVE GROUND SUPPORT MISSIONS, EITHER IN MIG 21S OR
FOUGA MAGISTERS.

C. POLISARIO: ALGERIAN SUPPLIES TO POLISARIO HAVE
SO FAR BEEN LIMITED TO LIGHT WEAPONS AND LAND ROVERS.
MOST SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY IN CURRENT POLISARIO ARSENAL
IS MORTARS AND A FEW BAZOOKAS. FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE,
POLISARIO WILL BE INCAPABLE OF ANYTHING MORE THAN
SABOTAGE AND MINOR HARASSMENT OPERATIONS.
TAKING AND HOLDING TOWN OR MILITARY STRONG POINT OUT OF
QUESTION.

2. COMMENT: MOST OF FOREGOING STRIKES US AS REASONABLE.
ALGERIANS HAVE RECEIVED GOOD DEAL OF EQUIPMENT AND PROCESS
OF INTEGRATING IT INTO ARMED FORCES WILL TAKE TIME. IN
OUR VIEW, IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUDGE WHAT SOVIET ATTITUDE
TOWARDS ALGERIAN'S SAHARA EFFORT WILL BE. ASSUME SUCCESS OF
GOA'S CAMPAIGN ON GROUND WILL INFLUENCE
MOSCOW'S FUTURE DECISIONS. PARKER

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